CONGESTION IN THE MALAKAL PROTECTION OF CIVILIAN (POC) SITE, SOUTH SUDAN

“We are human beings [and] we want to be treated like humans”

Picture 1: Communal shelters (credit Fredrik Lerneryd)

Report by, Danish Refugee Council
About Danish Refugee Council

Danish Refugee Council (DRC) has been operational in South Sudan since 2005, working with the overall aim of achieving durable solutions for displaced populations. DRC implements a multi-sector response to support Sudanese refugees, internally displaced persons (IDP) and host populations both within established camps and in surrounding counties with projects and activities being tailored according to the needs and gaps in the local contexts. Their current programming components include: protection; camp coordination and camp management (CCCM); provision of emergency and transitional shelters within and outside of camp environments; provision of camp/community infrastructure; distribution of non-food items (NFIs); food security and livelihoods (FSL); and the deployment of international NGO safety advisors who support the humanitarian community.

Research Consultant

Alicia Elaine Luedke
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

With South Sudan’s third civil war (December 2013-Present) entering into its fourth year, over-two hundred thousand people are still seeking safety on the pre-existing bases of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) in what are now known as the Protection of Civilian (PoC) sites, or “PoCs.” Despite the signing of the August 2015 Agreement for the Resolution of Conflict in the Republic in South Sudan (ARCRSS), fighting has intensified throughout the country, especially since clashes re-erupted between government and opposition forces in the capital city, Juba in July 2016. Observers have been warning about a possible genocide and famine has already been declared in certain areas, deepening the looming sense of disaster. In this context, civilians who are not able to cross the borders of neighboring countries have few other options than to turn to the UN Peacekeeping Mission for protection. This is particularly accurate in the areas around Malakal in Upper Nile. Malakal has experienced some of the heaviest fighting since South Sudan’s conflict started on December 15th, 2013, changing hands various times with the tit-for-tat targeting of civilians by different armed groups, forcing tens of thousands to look for security within the gates of UNMISS.

The situation has not improved much over the past three years. Even with brief lulls in hostilities, changing conflict dynamics in Upper Nile have led to successive waves of violence and displacement while at the same time deepening ethnic tensions and historical grievances between groups in the area. Recent fighting on the west bank of Malakal in and around Wau Shilluk in January 2017 which saw the government taking control of the area from the opposition and blocking river access for civilians has only made matters worse. The civilians who fled to the Malakal PoC now have few options for return and resettlement. Indeed, the vast majority of those interviewed for this report expressed having come to the PoC as a result of insecurity in their home areas. Notwithstanding the fact that the PoC sites were intended to be “temporary” measures for the immediate physical protection of civilians fleeing from violence in South Sudan, the Malakal PoC has now been around for over three years.

Nevertheless, the populations in the PoC continue to live in dangerously congested conditions because of the lack of physical humanitarian space on the site. The consequences for the individuals, families and communities in the PoC are immense, decreasing peoples’ physical security and contributing to a marked decline in peoples’ health and wellbeing. Remedying the situation to achieve minimum humanitarian standards and establish safety and security within the PoC has been difficult. While the PoCs should be recognized as a life-saving measure developed by the Mission, it has been argued that the provision of services and expansion of the camp in order to decongest severely overcrowded areas would generate another so-called “pull factor” to the Malakal site. However, this is not the case. As the research demonstrates, people in the PoC are there for security reasons and should not have to choose between living in overly congested living conditions and leaving the PoC at great personal risk. Donors, UNMISS and the Government of South Sudan (GOSS), therefore, need to start thinking more critically about improving the living situation, including safety and security and service delivery for those residing in the Malakal site as the restrictions on freedom of movement and protection concerns outside the PoC remain exceedingly high.

At the time of writing in March 2017, the lack of physical humanitarian space in the PoC is having a major impact on service access with congestion cutting across and linking the different problems faced in the different sectors. At the same time, overcrowding is increasing the dependency of people on UNMISS and humanitarian agencies, while also leading to a reduction in peoples resilience and ability to recover from the shocks produced by the now over three-year old civil war with temporary solutions becoming permanent ones, leading to an overall depreciation in the quality of life for the Malakal PoC residents. For the populations living on the site the limitations in providing services due to the lack of space and overcrowded living conditions has become a constant reminder of their suffering and a visible manifestation of the precarious position they find themselves in, having to rely on external actors for everything from protection and security to meeting their basic needs. It is, along these lines, important
that stakeholders move beyond the limited emergency lens often applied in South Sudan and think about promoting the long-term recovery of the internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Malakal both to empower people to make their own decisions about their safety and security, as well as ensure that families and communities are able to sustain themselves once they have a real opportunity to leave the PoC.

Picture 2: Sector 4 Corridor (credit Fredrik Lerneryd)
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<td>ALP: Accelerated Learning Program</td>
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<td>ARCRSS: Agreement for the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan</td>
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<td>AUCISS: African Union Commission of Inquiry on South Sudan</td>
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<td>AWD: Acute Watery Diarrhea</td>
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<td>CCCM: Camp Coordination and Camp Management</td>
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<td>CFS: Child Friendly Space</td>
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<td>CP: Child Protection</td>
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<td>CPA: Comprehensive Peace Agreement</td>
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<td>CWG: Community Watch Group</td>
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<td>DRC: Danish Refugee Council</td>
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<td>GOSS: Government of South Sudan</td>
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<td>FGD: Focus Group Discussion</td>
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<td>FSL: Food Security and Livelihoods</td>
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<td>IDP: Internally Displaced Person</td>
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<td>IGA: Income Generating Activity</td>
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<td>IOM: International Organization for Migration</td>
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<td>KII: Key Informant Interviews</td>
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<td>M&amp;E: Monitoring and Evaluation</td>
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<td>MSF: Medicines Sans Frontiers</td>
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<td>NFI: Non-Food Item</td>
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<td>OLS: Operation Lifeline Sudan</td>
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<td>PoC: Protection of Civilians</td>
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<td>PSC: Peace and Security Council</td>
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<td>PSNs: People with Specific Needs</td>
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<td>PSS: Psychosocial Support</td>
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<td>RRP: Relief, Rehabilitation and Protection</td>
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<td>RTI: Respiratory Tract Infections</td>
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<td>SGBV: Sexual and Gender-Based Violence</td>
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<td>SME: Small and Medium Enterprises</td>
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<td>SOFA: Status of Forces Agreement</td>
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<td>SPLA: Sudan People’s Liberation Army</td>
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<td>SPLA-IG: Sudan People’s Liberation Army-In Government</td>
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<td>SPLA-IO: Sudan People’s Liberation Army-In Opposition</td>
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<td>SPLM: Sudan People’s Liberation Movement</td>
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<td>SSLS: South Sudan Law Society</td>
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<td>SSP: South Sudanese Pound</td>
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<td>TLS: Temporary Learning Space</td>
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<td>UN: United Nations</td>
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<td>UNDP: United Nations Development Program</td>
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<td>UNMISS: United Nations Mission in South Sudan</td>
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<td>UNPOL: United Nations Police</td>
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<tr>
<td>WASH: Water, Sanitation and Hygiene</td>
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I. INTRODUCTION

"...There is no where we can go...if Wau Shilluk was safe we would have gone back. We are waiting patiently to go back. We don’t want to be here” (Interview-Woman, Sector 4-Block B, 14/02/17)

Conflict in South Sudan has displaced millions of civilians, an estimated 1.85 million of whom are trapped inside the country’s borders with few options for escaping the brutality of the now over three-year-old civil war. Of those displaced internally, over two hundred thousand have sought protection at the pre-existing bases of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), also known as the Protection of Civilian (PoC) sites, or the “PoCs” as a life-saving last resort. Yet, escalating fighting throughout the country and new shocks produced by continuing violence, including worsening food insecurity and the almost complete collapse of the South Sudanese economy has led to a protracted displacement situation on UN bases with the PoCs now entering into their fourth year. Many people have been residing there since the start of war in December 2013 and it does not look like the situation will change anytime soon with the total population displaced into the PoCs said to be even higher today than it was during peak periods of fighting in 2015. Nevertheless, three years on, achieving minimum humanitarian standards and establishing safety and security in many of the sites remains a significant challenge, undermining the ability of internally displaced men, women and children to live dignified lives. This is especially true in the Malakal PoC in Upper Nile. The population has been living in cramped and overcrowded conditions for over three years now, oftentimes with limited access to services due to the restricted space for humanitarian service delivery. The consequences for the local population in the PoC are immense, decreasing their physical security and contributing to a major decline in peoples’ health and wellbeing with the spread of disease amongst people living in close quarters where space-related considerations frequently eclipse proper sanitation and hygiene.

Rectifying the situation and making improvements that could enhance the safety and quality of life for the families and communities forced to live in the PoC due to insecurity, has proven difficult. Many people have argued that the provision of services inside the PoC site is already generating a so-called “pull factor,” meaning that expanding the camp in order to try and meet minimum humanitarian standards and decongest overcrowded areas would simply generate another draw to the PoC, which was intended to be a temporary measure for the protection of civilian populations in South Sudan. However, as this report and many more before it have made clear, the internally displaced person (IDP) population in the Malakal PoC, just like the other PoCs, fled there for protection from violence and persecution. With little progress towards the implementation of the August 2015 Agreement for the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (ARCSS) and intensifying fighting between the government and the opposition in Upper Nile since military clashes re-erupted in the capital city, Juba in July 2016, civilians have few options outside of a PoC context. This is particularly accurate in Malakal where violence broke out in January 2017 on the west bank, forcing thousands of civilians to flee from Wau Shilluk north towards Fashoda and Abuoc.

The purpose of this report is to understand how congestion and overcrowding in the Malakal PoC is affecting service access for the local population, as well as safety and security and quality of life in the context of deteriorating conditions both inside and immediately outside of the site. While providing contextual information, including how displacement has influenced the resilience of families and communities and gender dynamics in the PoC, the research conducted by DRC and this final report focuses broadly on four different aspects: i) safety and security; ii) service access and delivery; iii) quality of life; and iv) emergency preparedness. The report attempts to make two main points along these lines. The first is that congestion and the lack of space in the Malakal PoC cut across and link different problems faced by different sectors in the PoC, having an impact not only on humanitarian service delivery and quality of life for the IDP population, but also on safety and security for the populations who came to the PoC in search of protection. The lack of space for food security and livelihoods (FSL)
opportunities, for example, increases the propensity of women to engage in risky livelihoods strategies leaving the site in search of food and firewood where they risk sexual assault at the hands of armed actors, effectively tying women’s sexual agency and physical security to their income and resource access inside the PoC.\textsuperscript{vi} Second and related to the first point, the present lack of space and congestion in the PoC is actually reinforcing the dependency of people, while also leading to a concomitant decline in their resilience and ability to recover from shocks produced by the conflict, such as the aforementioned food insecurity and economic crisis. To use the same example of FSL interventions, although it may not have made sense, nor been feasible during the start of the PoC to achieve food security from people’s own livelihoods, by not allowing people to cultivate, and become self-reliant, humanitarian partners and UNMISS are actually reproducing the “dependency culture”\textsuperscript{vii} and view of the PoC populations as subjects, rather than agents;\textsuperscript{ix} a culture that the Mission and humanitarian agencies are purportedly aiming to avoid.

Accordingly, issues of space and congestion in the PoC need to be looked at in a much more holistic and multi-dimensional manner. A protection issue is not just a protection issue, it is a water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) issue, it is a FSL issue and so on, requiring much more in the way of a coordinated and truly multi-sectoral response. No one anticipated that the PoCs in South Sudan, including the one in Malakal, would be anything other than provisional, however, three years later, humanitarian partners, UNMISS, the Government of South Sudan (GOSS) and the international donor community need to start considering more durable solutions given the current scenario and ongoing violence throughout Upper Nile. Furthermore, although it continues to be important to respond to the immediate needs of the population in the Malakal PoC, we also need to think about promoting the long-term recovery and resilience of families and communities, which has decreased markedly due, at least in part, to the high levels of congestion and the consequences that such congestion carries. Additional space and the shelter and other service-related improvements that such space would entail would not only increase the safety and security of PoC residents, but also contribute to their dignity and over-all wellbeing. As one focus group discussion respondent put it:

\textit{“It was planned as an emergency that now has lasted for long. But, we are coming to four years. We don’t know how long we will here in the PoC”} (FGD-Males, Sector 1, 17/02/17).
Methodology

“It is good that you have come to ask us about the issues we are facing and it is now from the community that you can address them and you can actually see what we are going through...space is a major thing and people have to be able to live in a dignified manner...we are human beings [and] we want to be treated like humans...we have the same desires and we need to have a...life and have our privacy like you do” (FGD-Males, Sector 3, 31/01/17)

The methodology employed for the research was qualitative in nature, but aimed to collect both general data about camp residents, as well as highly detailed and contextualized information. It was based on extended local fieldwork conducted by a DRC consultant in January and February 2017 in the Malakal PoC and Malakal Town. Key informant interviews (KIIs) were also completed with humanitarian service providers and UNMISS representatives. Building on past research in South Sudan, the field research prioritized the perceptions and views of the individuals, families and communities living in the PoC and in Malakal Town, utilizing an ethnographic approach that “draws on the subjective observations,
interpretation and analysis of the participants/respondents in [an] effort…to capture the micro-level or lived experience of armed conflict and violence.”

It was felt that this approach would help shed light onto the local context and understandings of congestion, service delivery and safety and security amongst the IDPs, themselves and provide an in-depth look into the impact of congestion on the lives of those most affected.

Spending over a month in the PoC also enabled rich observation of life for the IDPs, which was further enhanced by the fact that the research consultant spent time with individuals in each of the twenty-nine blocks in all four sectors. Key assessment areas included questions reflecting the quality of people’s shelters, the amount of privacy they have, their access to services, safety and security both inside and immediately outside of the PoC, people’s relationships with their neighbors, their lives before displacement, their feelings about peace and more.

In order to identify participants, the study used both purposive and random sampling techniques. During the first round of research in the PoC wherein the researcher conducted twenty-six focus group discussions (FGDs) across the four sectors and eleven in-depth individual interviews, she relied on the block leaders and community outreach to help select respondents. In order to adjust for any possible bias and overcome some of the limitations associated with this approach, the researcher with the help of the Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) and Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) team from DRC randomly selected individuals from each of the twenty-nine blocks in the PoC to interview for a period of around one hour. The same strategy was then used to identify males and females for an additional ten FGDs. Overall the research in the PoC encompassed a total of thirty-six FGDs and forty in-depth individual interviews with over two hundred and seventy respondents. We also completed four focus groups with twenty-three participants in Malakal Town (eleven of whom were male and twelve of whom were female) and around thirteen KII for a total of just around three hundred participants, forty FGDs and fifty-three individual interviews (see table 1 below for gender breakdown of all FGDs and interviews carried out in the PoC specifically).

It is worth briefly noting some of the methodological limitations encountered during the study. Part of the original research plan entailed the consultant traveling to Wau Shilluk and Kodok to understand why people were leaving the Malakal PoC and where they were going in order to supplement past intentions surveys conducted by partners with a qualitative appreciation of people’s reasons of exit. However, as mentioned in the introduction, fighting erupted on the west bank in January, preventing the researcher from reaching populations there. Beyond the challenges of conducting research in the fluid, conflict-affected environment that is Upper Nile, there were also the issues connected to local-level politics and leadership in the PoC who had, on occasion, attempted to block mobilization of focus group discussion participants and interviewees. Some people also refrained from participating on account of the lack of incentives. Furthermore, the individuals randomly selected during the second round of research expressed hesitation participating in the study without the consent of the block-level leadership. Then of course there are the high-levels of survey fatigue in South Sudan where expectations are not often well managed during NGO assessments and the number of assessments and amount of research often far surpasses any tangible benefit to the community members. Many of those that we approached during the second round of research were not willing to be interviewed and even amongst those who were it was often difficult to move past their very understandable frustrations of having been involved in numerous assessments without seeing any follow-up, or improvements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 1. GENDER/PARTICIPANT BREAKDOWN/SECTOR IN THE POC</th>
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<td>SECTOR 1</td>
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<td>SECTOR 4</td>
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While observers ordinarily point to the divisions in the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement (SPLM) leadership in the period following South Sudan’s independence on July 9th, 2011 as one of the principle causes of the current civil war, many of the issues being witnessed today have their origins in the second civil war between the Sudan People’s Liberation Army (SPLA) and the Khartoum government in Sudan between 1983 and 2005 and the split in southern unity in the 1990s. As highlighted in research from the last civil war, the fracturing of the SPLA into different factions in 1991 precipitated a “polarization” of ethnic groups in South Sudan and unparalleled levels of ethnic conflict, much of which directly targeted civilians. In fact, “the number of [southerners that]…died in…fratricidal conflicts and in other South-on-South confrontations…[after] the resumption of full-scale civil war in Sudan in 1983 exceed[ed] those lost to atrocities committed by the Sudanese army.” During this time there was said to be a rapid shift in traditional rules of warfare amongst some of South Sudan’s ethnic groups with women, children, and the elderly once protected from fighting, becoming the primary targets of such violence and previously forbidden practices, such as the devastation of people’s homes and crops, all becoming commonplace. The result was an extremely divided South at the end of the second civil war.

Unfortunately, the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) that ended the conflict between the Khartoum government and the SPLA did little to alleviate the grievances that followed from the high levels of intra-south fighting in the last war, concentrating instead on the main dichotomy of conflict between the North and South, and as observers have pointed out, positioning an ethnically fractured SPLM as the leader of the South and after 2011, the head of the world’s newest nation. In the period following the CPA and South Sudan’s independence a patronage-based award system and what were otherwise incredibly violent disarmament campaigns by the SPLA against southern militias and armed groups not part of the integrated armed forces, simply reified the ethno-political divides that exploded in the South after 1991. The period of relative peace between 2005 and December 2013 was not very peaceful at all and while the term “post-conflict” is relative in most war-torn environments, this is especially true in South Sudan where inter-communal fighting and small-scale insurgencies continued to be routine even after the country’s independence in 2011. Indeed, although many people identify the birth of the PoCs in South Sudan to be December 2013, this was not the first time that civilians fled to UNMISS bases in search of protection. As one report pointed out, there were six separate occasions in which civilians fled to UNMISS in Pibor, Jonglei State between 2012 and 2013 due to the inter-ethnic fighting there.

That being said, nobody was prepared for the speed and intensity with which the security situation in South Sudan unraveled after the current civil war erupted in the capital, Juba on December 15th, 2013 following a political dispute in the SPLM and the further fracturing of the ruling party and armed forces into the SPLM/A-In Government (IG) and SPLM/A-In Opposition (IO). Both the government and newly formed opposition quickly started engaging in the ethno-political targeting of civilians perceived to be aligned to one, or the other side, forcing thousands of people to flee to UNMISS for protection. Although UNMISS often comes under criticism for their ineffectiveness in fulfilling their civilian protection mandate, everybody values the politically fraught decision that the Mission made to open their gates, leading to the establishment of the PoCs. As one report observed, past experiences of civilians seeking temporary sanctuary at UNMISS bases post-2011 independence in places like Pibor had apparently prompted a discussion between the Mission and the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT)
just prior to the events of December 2013 to develop guidelines for such an incident. Since the war started, tens of thousands of South Sudanese have been killed, raped, tortured, or disappeared with UN bodies and human rights agencies pointing to evidence of war crimes and crimes against humanity. Accordingly, many people living in the PoCs do not feel safe enough to return. When asked what was preventing people from leaving the PoCs in a 2015 survey by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the South Sudan Law Society (SSLS), for instance, seventy-three percent of respondents identified continuous insecurity as their reason for staying at UNMISS bases despite poor living conditions. Most of the populations residing in the PoCs are affiliated with the opposition, the SPLA-IO and are Nuer belonging to the same ethnic group as the opposition leader, Riek Machar, or are ethno-politically aligned with other ethnic groups that have since December 2013 made alliances with the SPLA-IO – as is the case in Malakal in Upper Nile. As such, they have a very real fear of violence if they leave the sites, many of which are effectively encircled by SPLA forces who view the PoCs as a “fifth column” for the opposition and rebel sanctum.

This is certainly the case for those living in the Malakal PoC. According to past reports, Upper Nile has experienced some of the heaviest fighting in the war. Malakal changed hands numerous times between the start of the conflict there on December 24th, 2013 and April 2014. Forces on both sides carried out house-to-house searches, arbitrarily detained people and murdered civilians, allegedly targeting people on the basis of their ethnicity. The 2015 African Union Commission of Inquiry on South Sudan (AUCISS) even concluded that government soldiers in Malakal had committed war crimes, with further evidence of killings of Shilluk civilians by SPLA-IO, as well as widespread sexual violence. Against this backdrop it is not surprising that many civilians fled for safety wherever they could find it. For many people, the PoC was not even their first choice and for those that had the means and capacity to do so, they tried to seek refuge across the river on the west bank of Malakal in Wau Shilluk. As one woman stated:

“[p]reviously I was staying in Malakal Town and then I went to Wau Shilluk and then we went to Lul and from Lul we went back to Wau Shilluk and then I came [to the PoC]” (Interview-Female, Sector 2, Block O, 10/02/17).

Others had few to no options outside of turning to UNMISS for protection with the first wave of civilians arriving at the gates of the base in Malakal on December 24th.

Unlike the other PoCs across the country the population of the Malakal PoC was, and continues to be, relatively mixed. When civilians started arriving at Charlie Gate at the UNMISS base in Malakal in December 2013 there was apparently no distinction made between ethnic groups since the conflict was just beginning to configure itself and everyone was caught off guard, including civilians. Changing dynamics in the broader conflict have since altered the composition of the site, but prior to February 2016, the population included around 40,000 Shilluk, 4,000 Dinka and 3,500 Nuer and numerous Darfuri and Ethiopian traders. Though fighting outside of the PoC experienced a lull after having had changed hands various times in early-mid 2014, tensions were known to be simmering inside the PoC between the different groups. Then in May 2015 Shilluk Commander, Joseph Olony defected from the SPLA eventually declaring allegiance to the SPLA-IO, reigniting long-standing grievances between the Shilluk and the Dinka Padang who both hail from the area around Malakal. As emphasized in other research,
Shilluk grievances stemmed back to the SPLA’s violent disarmament campaign in 2010 on the west bank and the perceived disenfranchisement of the Shilluk by Dinka politicians in the post-CPA, post-independence periods.\textsuperscript{xxxiv} During the second civil war, Dinka Padang populations were also said to have taken over land on the river bank, which the Shilluk considered to be rightfully theirs; an occupation that was formalized by the creation of Akoka County in 2011.\textsuperscript{xxv} The clashes that ensued between Olonyi’s forces and the SPLA in 2015 as a result forced the size of the PoC to increase by over one hundred percent from 22,000 to 47,000.\textsuperscript{xxvi} Following Olonyi’s defection, the SPLA also blockaded supplies, including much needed life-saving assistance from reaching Shilluk civilians in what were considered by the SPLA to be “rebel” held areas of the west bank, prompting the movement of additional IDPs to the PoC.\textsuperscript{xxvii}

The unilateral declaration of the creation of twenty-eight states by the South Sudan government in October 2015 after the signing of the August ARCSS in the same year only made matters worse, solidifying the divides between the Dinka Padang and Shilluk that both pre-dated and characterized the current civil war and buttressing the already contested Dinka Padang land claims to parts of the east bank, including Malakal itself.\textsuperscript{xxviii} The resultant tensions erupted into full-scale hostilities inside the Malakal PoC on February 17\textsuperscript{th}, 2016 lasting until the next day with backing from government militias from outside the PoC, leading to nineteen dead, one hundred and eight injured, thirty-five per cent of shelters destroyed and over 29,000 displaced once again.\textsuperscript{xxix} Dinka and Darfuri shelters in the PoC remained unscathed, however, all of the Nuer shelters and a large amount of Shilluk shelters were burnt to the ground.\textsuperscript{x} The incident led to the mass exodus of the Dinka living in the PoC who are according to most of the civilians on the site perceived to be responsible for the incident vis-à-vis their connection to the SPLM/A-IG. Now the ethnic composition of the PoC is majority Shilluk with a minority Nuer population.

With the PoC not being a safe haven for civilians it is hardly surprising that the vast majority (seventy-four per cent) of participants interviewed by the DRC consultant for the research expressed having come to the PoC for protection with insecurity as the foremost barrier to their return (see chart 1 below).

![Chart 1. Reasons for Coming to the PoC](chart1.png)

Even amongst the small portion of respondents who cited coming to the PoC because of hunger and the lack of services, hunger and lack of services are actually rooted in insecurity. Most of the people who spoke about needing to access the food distribution in the PoC came from Wau Shilluk on the west bank in 2015 after Olonyi’s defection and the blocking of services and goods going to “rebel” held areas by the SPLA. As is commonly the case in South Sudan, people also did not feel as though it was safe enough to cultivate and tend to the fields.\textsuperscript{xii} Understandably, from a civilian perspective there is little sense in
cultivating when there is a high likelihood your crops will be razed, or you will be displaced before the harvest period. There has been a somewhat grisly predictability to the seasonality of conflict in Upper Nile and South Sudan as a whole where just as civilians are planting before the rainy season (generally May to October), there are new waves of fighting and displacement as armed groups try to seize and hold positions before the rain sets in and they can prepare for the next dry season offensive.

Currently, people living in the Malakal PoC continue to face tremendous risk leaving the camp. Men who leave the PoC are thought to be the targets for murder, disappearance and torture due to their perceived association with the opposition versus women who are considered to be the legitimate targets of sexual violence and rape by armed actors waiting just outside of the perimeters of UNMISS. As one man living in sector four in the Malakal PoC declared:

“We, the men in particular do not move out. It is just the women. We... are just in the PoC moving like fish in a pond. It is really very difficult. There are many soldiers who are moving around the PoC. You will get shot, or disappeared if you move outside because you are regarded as an enemy because you are from a different tribe and the government soldiers are Dinka” (FGD-Adult Males, Sector 4, 02/02/17)

With males chancing death, “rape is generally deemed comparably ‘preferential’” with “women regularly proactively confront[ing]...armed men,”xxxii As mentioned in the introduction, women end up in a position where they have to make what have been referred to elsewhere as “choiceless decisions”xxxiii leaving the PoC knowing that they may be raped, but wanting to be able to support their children. A woman living in sector two puts this point quite poignantly:

“Everyone knows that outside is not good, but you go like that because the conditions we are facing [in the PoC]. We need firewood, but sometimes we meet some problems out there” (FGD-Females, Sector 2, 15/02/17)

Though livelihoods patrols are being conducted by UNMISS in Malakal a few days a week, the other days a week civilians leaving the PoC in search of items to meet their basic nutritional and livelihoods needs are left exposed.

It is worth noting, it is not just encountering armed actors that put civilians at risk when they leave the camp. The reification of ethnic divisions after the declaration of the 28 states in October 2015, inter-communal clashes in the PoC in February 2016 and the renewal of old tensions between the Dinka Padang and Shilluk are all being deeply felt at a civilian level. Civilians in the Malakal PoC and Malakal Town perceive there to have been a shift away from a politically driven dispute between their leaders to an inter-ethnic clash, which has mostly targeted civilians. One participant in the PoC comments:

“When this crisis first started it seemed political, but now it seems like a tribal war. They are seeing us as Shilluk as the enemy and they will just kill us. It is a mark that [means we] will be killed if we leave...That is why we prefer to stay in the PoC” (FGD-Males, Sector 1, 17/02/17)

Although ethnicity is not a root cause of the violence in South Sudan, as one report put it, the conflict has become “politically ethicized” in that “it has a strongly ethnic dimension, but one that is being driven by political agendas,” with violence organized and mobilized around ethnic lines.xlv Women along these lines indicated that when they left the PoC they sometimes experienced intimidation by Dinka civilians in Town, who would tell them that as Shilluk they do not belong outside of the PoC. A woman from sector three explains how:

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“Yesterday I also went and of course there is small youths [allegedly aged 17-20] who are throwing stones. They are Dinka boys throwing stones in Malakal and saying go back to the PoC” (FGD-Adult Females, Sector 3, 02/02/17)

A second woman recounts her experience as:

“I went to Malakal once to get charcoal. There was a problem with the Dinka women there. They were insulting us and saying you chased us from UNMISS and now we are in Malakal Town” (FGD-Female Youth, Sector 1, 23/01/17)

This dynamic has been exacerbated by perceptions of discrimination amongst the Dinka Padang population residing in Malakal Town who view UNMISS and humanitarian partners as favoring the Nuer and Shilluk communities in the PoC in terms of access to services and protection. During the focus groups in Malakal Town it became apparent that the Dinka IDPs who left the PoC after the February 2016 incident felt as though they were being disadvantaged, which was reinforcing the ethnic tensions that preceded the violence that erupted in the PoC last year. As one Dinka female youth noted:

“People are getting food differently. Those who get food early are Shilluk and we get it late. We are about to die. You are listening to the Shilluk and not listening to us” (FGD-Female Youth, Malakal Town, 22/02/17)

In this context, people have few other options outside the PoC. Many people’s homes have been destroyed and for those whose haven’t they have been occupied by an increasingly hostile military and civilian population in Malakal Town. The fighting that flared up on the west bank in Wau Shilluk in January 2017 has made the possibility of resettling IDPs elsewhere a non-point. Despite the movement of over one thousand women and children out of the PoC across the river in December 2016 mostly to reunite with other family members, or look for safety in Sudan, this is no longer an option with heavy conflict in late January, early February 2017 in Wau Shilluk, which is now under the control of government troops, forcing tens of thousands of civilians to flee north to Kodok and Aburoc. Even within Aburoc, which is some thirty kilometers from Kodok civilians do not feel safe, with fifty-three percent of respondents interviewed by DRC as part of a rapid protection assessment noting that they did not feel secure.

Current Space and Shelter Situation

Living conditions inside the Malakal PoC do not necessarily provide South Sudanese civilians with any sanctuary. Congestion has reached staggering levels posing additional risks to the population above and beyond those they already face when they leave the camp. Though the current population of the PoC has decreased from 47,000 just before February 2016 to 30,559, overcrowding continues to be a considerable issue. As referenced in the introduction, the consequences of the lack of space for the local population in the PoC are immense, decreasing their physical security and contributing to a major decline in people’s health and wellbeing with the spread of disease amongst people living in close quarters where space-related considerations frequently eclipse proper sanitation and hygiene. In fact, the conditions in the camp as to be discussed in more detail below are actually undermining the safety and security of the very civilians who fled there for refuge.
The PoC as evidenced by Map 2 above is broken up into four sectors. The largest sector is sector one, however, the most congested sector as illustrated in the table below is sector four. It should be noted that usable surface area, or meters squared per individual includes drainage and service areas and does not reflect the actual individual space that families and communities have in the PoC, which is significantly lower when it comes to the amount of covered living space. In July 2014 when PoC 1, now sector one was created, the around 22,000 IDPs who initially fled to UNMISS were relocated there largely from the UNMIS logistics base and provided with individual/household shelters. Sector two was subsequently created in July 2015 with a 320,000 meters squared expansion to accommodate additional arrivals and decongest the already dangerously congested sector one. At the same time, however, after Olonyi’s defection in 2015 violence continued, prompting an influx of some 25,000 IDPs, many of whom settled in sector one wherever they could find space, re-producing colossal levels of congestion. Two additional areas (sectors three and four) were later developed to help accommodate the new wave of people entering the PoC in mid-late 2015. With the exception of sector two, which was re-designed and better planned after the departure of the Dinka IDP population, when the PoC site was being developed minimum humanitarian standards were largely disregarded due to the lack of space with one of the main tensions between UNMISS and the humanitarians providing services in the PoC being about physical humanitarian space for service delivery, or rather the lack thereof. Again, as stressed in other research, UNMISS were not humanitarians and did not have the capacity, nor awareness of humanitarian standards.
for responding to the needs of the civilians, leading to an a division of labor wherein the Mission would be responsible for security and external threats to the PoC site and international humanitarian organizations for providing life-saving assistance.

TABLE 2. POC POPULATION AND SURFACE AREA BREAKDOWN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>No. of Households</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Surface Area (M²)</th>
<th>M²/Person</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sector 1</td>
<td>13,745</td>
<td>5,086</td>
<td>6,617</td>
<td>7,128</td>
<td>258,000</td>
<td>18.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sector 2</td>
<td>8,357</td>
<td>2,866</td>
<td>3,808</td>
<td>2,015</td>
<td>160,000</td>
<td>19.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sector 3</td>
<td>3,521</td>
<td>922</td>
<td>1,506</td>
<td>2,015</td>
<td>46,000</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sector 4</td>
<td>4,936</td>
<td>1426</td>
<td>2,152</td>
<td>2,784</td>
<td>36,000</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>30,559</td>
<td>10,300</td>
<td>14,083</td>
<td>16,476</td>
<td>500,000</td>
<td>14.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Problematically, however, humanitarian partners are now in a position where they are essentially striving to meet non-standards in their work in the PoC. Not only are minimum humanitarian standards not being met, but as demonstrated in Table 2 above the space-individual ratio varies considerably by sector. Shelter standards are also not consistent. While those who settled in sector one first are in individual/household shelters, people in parts of sector two and all of sectors three and four are currently living in communal shelters with thirty-two people per shelter (although partitions have been provided to give groups of eight more privacy). A large share of those interviewed for the research who were living in the communal shelters, especially in sector four where the usable surface area per individual is the lowest, referenced feeling like “animals being put together in a cage” (FGD-Male Youth, Sector 4, 03/02/17). A research participant in sector four says how:

“The situation of the tents is really very sad, because it is very congested. It is many inside and family is given a small space to settle in…If all the members are inside, no one can lie down even and rest...it is not comfortable and you cannot...take rest…it is a multi-purpose room: it is a store; a bedroom; and a kitchen, and people are trying to get accustomed, but it is very hard...we are living like chickens and rats inside” (FGD-PSNs, Sector 4, 06/02/17).

The disparities between sectors are also reflected in the concentration of services in sector two, reinforcing tensions and feeding into negative perceptions about humanitarians. Many IDPs, particularly vulnerable groups, such as persons with specific needs (PSNs) also expressed having sizable difficulty accessing services in sector two given their mobility restrictions.
Considering that the PoCs were supposed to be an interim measure for “protective physical security,” the shelters themselves are for the most part temporary, constructed out of plastic sheeting, wooden poles and bamboo and according to some partners UNMISS has been resistant to moving towards more permanent structures for the camp residents on account of the fact that it would add legitimacy to the argument that the PoCs are not temporary solutions. Unless households have iron sheeting that they purchased for themselves, or taken from elsewhere they are often left exposed to the extreme heat in the dry season and the heavy rains in the rainy season when water enters and at times causes flooding in people’s shelters. The plastic sheeting in such a congested area also renders people and their shelters vulnerable to fire. Many people actually rationalized the construction of small cooking extensions outside of their tents as a fire prevention mechanism, knowing how quickly fires can spread in the PoC and that bringing in water trucks is near impossible due to the lack of space in between shelters and on the roads, especially in sectors one and four. This was illustrated first on January 10th, 2016 when a fire broke out in the PoC killing one, injuring eight and destroying eighty-one shelters, and then again during the February 2016 violence inside the PoC when fires razed a large proportion of shelters in less than twenty-four hours.

The lack of ventilation makes the situation even worse, contributing to respiratory infections’ as the smoke from cooking has nowhere to escape the shelter, which currently serves as a bedroom, living room and kitchen. These problems are particularly acute in communal shelters where smoke often spreads from one area of the shelter to another causing discomfort to neighbors and even disputes.

It should be noted as well that, the nature of the shelters as temporary also contributes to crime and insecurity for the IDPs in the PoC. Criminals in the PoC are well known to tear the plastic sheeting in order to steal people’s property and belongings from inside. In fact, one of the reasons why people attempt to build fences out of iron sheeting, which contributes further to congestion, is that it provides a semblance more security for residents. As the Community Watch Group (CWG) in sector two commented:

“With the tents...it is not enough and it is a plastic sheet and can always get torn and the thieves easily enter and they can enter and can get inside...anything can happen...with protection.” (FGD-CWG, Sector 2, 30/01/16).

Though, in 2016 the development of sector 5 commenced as an extension of the PoC, with an additional sector beside sector two. The development was stalled at site planning stage due to non-commitment of UNMISS. Whilst the reasons for this remain debatable, many people point to the formerly referenced conflicts between humanitarians and UNMISS over issues of space. Admittedly, UNMISS was also in a difficult position. Because the government perceives the PoCs to be a “fifth column” for the opposition, the relationship between the Mission and SPLA-IG is incredibly tense. With the government position essentially reiterating that all people should leave the PoCs since the signing of the August 2015 peace agreement, an extension would undoubtedly cause UNMISS further controversy. That being said, unlike other PoC extensions where UNMISS has had to come to an agreement with the South Sudan government over land, the space initially allocated for a further extension would have been within the existing perimeters of the base. With the absence of physical space and the attendant lack of shelter alternatives in the Malakal PoC right now, people lack personal security and safety and have had a difficult sustaining family and community life in what have become extraordinarily cramped living conditions for the displaced populations residing there. This will have a long-term impact on peoples’ resilience and ability to recover from the shocks produced by the current conflict with temporary solutions becoming permanent ones, leading to an overall depreciation of the quality of life for the PoC population.
Conflict, Dislocation and Isolation

People living in the Malakal PoC, similar to other areas of the country, have experienced continuous trauma, bearing witness to and undergoing the violent atrocities associated with the civil war and being displaced and driven from their homes. Families have been ripped apart and peoples’ education and livelihoods have been devastated with the loss of assets and land causing a massive disruption in the social fabric.\textsuperscript{ni} The people living in the PoC have now become “almost entirely dependent on external assistance for survival…factors [that]…fuel…interpersonal conflict and domestic violence.”\textsuperscript{nivii} Overcrowding in this kind of setting becomes a significant source of instability at the community and household level. Congestion in camps like the Malakal PoC enhances the anonymity and isolation of displaced persons, while at the same time undermining local mechanisms of support by weakening the kinds of cohesion that populations relied on pre-displacement, decreasing the overall resilience of families and communities. As discovered during the research, housing congestion, specifically in areas with communal shelters in parts of sector two and sectors three and four are leading to heightened tensions both within and between households, as multiple families often with no prior connection having had to come together in a single space. This has not only produced conflict between individual households who have different lifestyles, backgrounds and so on, but it has also increased the vulnerability of certain groups who are often forced to live with people they do not know, which is especially true for female headed households. As one male respondent detailed:

“You...did a mistake...the condition that you gave in the relocation was not good and you expected people to combine and reach figures you wanted for a single partition of the shelter and need 8 and there are female headed households and they need to get people they don’t know so in this cause it is [causing]...a lot of problems and will cause conflicts...It is unacceptable...you are combined with people you do not know and it is not proper” (FGD-Adult Males, Sector 2, 26/01/17).

Young women in a focus group comparably describe:

“...[You] should be giving women a space on their own with the kid. You should not be combining with [other people] in the shelter” (FGD-Female Youth, Sector 2, 26/01/17)

Under these circumstances minor issues often spiral into major problems, with some of the biggest sources of discord reported across the four sectors to be:
i. Fighting between children, wherein the mothers become involved, sometimes coming into violent confrontation with one another, necessitating the intervention of the traditional leaders and the CWG

ii. When the smoke from one partitioned area of a communal shelter spreads to another, disturbing other families

iii. When households and individuals build extensions into the demarcated area of another shelter

Several people interviewed in the PoC noted how the psychological impact of the conflict and their displacement had made it difficult to cope with small issues and how with nowhere to rest, or escape to, individuals and at times whole families are being brought into constant contact and conflict with each other. Another participant asserts how:

“Here, people are just together and they are traumatized and they are fighting all of the time...People are psychologically depressed and that is why even a small thing [will become a big issue]. People are not at rest. They are not fine” (Interview-Woman, Sector 1, Block E, 07/02/2017)

The lack of space has also precipitated a massive decline in the cohesion of families. Within households not having room where family members can get away from one another is leading to a situation where people are no longer getting along as they used to with children clashing with their guardians and parents constantly “quarreling.” Women and to a lesser extent their husbands felt that it was culturally reprehensible to have sexual relations when their family members and neighbors could hear them, with men expressing a considerable amount of frustration with the lack of “private time” with their wives. All of this has simply served to reinforce the inter-generational tensions that already exist in South Sudan between an older generation who are bent on maintaining a modicum of community and tradition and a younger generation who are trying to establish an identity of their own and are said to no longer listen. Though the definition of youth in South Sudan is quite expansive reaching anywhere from after initiation ceremonies at thirteen to forty years of age, as highlighted elsewhere, the term “youth” only really applies to males who tend to be unduly lumped together as disobedient and a threat to community life.

The ability to resolve conflicts in this context has been remarkably eroded. Customary leaders, such as the chiefs felt as though they have lost their authority, part of which has to do with the fact that they spend the majority of their time resolving the minor problems that occur in the PoC that did not conventionally fall within the purview of their responsibilities. At the same time, youths feel as though humanitarian partners and UNMISS have endowed traditional leaders, particularly the block leaders with legitimacy that they were not necessarily owed, often disenfranchising the youth. Additionally, chiefs expressed how they had formerly dealt with disputes at the (sub)clan level, but how in the PoC where people were coming from different locations, representing different clans and sub-clans and in some instances entire ethnic groups, it had become difficult to resolve issues in a culturally-specific manner. This has obviously been exacerbated by the loss of assets amongst the population as most customary solutions entail compensation as the primary form of redress, used to repair social relations and restore the social equilibrium. When asked how dealing with disputes was different now in the PoC than prior to displacement, for instance, block leaders in sector one noted how:

“There is a big difference. Previously we dealt with [issues at the] clan level and community level and family...issues, but in the PoC people are mixed from different locations so you have to deal with it in a complex way because there are different people from different communities and minority tribes and there are many issues that arise here, like every day there are issues to be resolved....We as the chiefs are tired of dealing with this issue of space and nothing has been done and people continue to live together in a congested settlement” (FGD-Block Leaders, Sector 1, 30/01/2017).
In line with the above, male youth announce how:

“When we first came to the PoC we didn’t know each other and many people came from different areas and we met here... if NGOs come with the purpose of recruiting people and give authority to chiefs and sector leaders and they go and select people related to them to go and work...we don’t like this, it is making people uncomfortable and [it is] nepotism...Of course, for us the youth, the chiefs don’t want us...the chiefs are not paying attention to us and no one can support us” (FGD-Male Youth, Sector 2, 26/01/17)

Gender, Culture and Youth

This has all occurred against the backdrop of rapid shifts in gender relations and social life for the populations living in the Malakal PoC. Prior to displacement it was common that a household would be divided in terms of the gendered division of labor, as well as physical space for different age and gender sects. And while it is rare to have a culturally sensitive camp setting, it is important to note that the PoC represents a radical departure from conventional ways of life for those that reside there. Both men and women communicated the need for separate spaces for themselves, but also for their children, with parents coming together in a single shelter only in the evenings. This need for physical independence is particularly acute for male youth. Culturally-speaking when a male reaches the age of around sixteen and above he should be in a separate home from his parents, an apparent prerequisite to being seen as eligible for marriage and reaching adulthood, pushing many youth to build on water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) corridors and construct illegal shelters, further augmenting congestion. But, because of the lack of space, youth sometimes end up having to group together in illegal shelters and with the absence of supervision and the more general collapse of community and moral structures in the PoC, they are reportedly engaging in risky and violent behaviors. Although some people impute the tendency of male youth to build illegal shelters and involve themselves in illicit activities to their shared identity as a category of delinquents, as past anthropological work on youth in South Sudan has made clear, many South Sudanese youth merely want to invest in home and family life and tend more so to associate with ideals of “responsible adulthood,” “illustrat[ing]…not generational rebellion, but the moral continuity in local society.”

Yet, with the rapid shift in gender relations and the gendered division of labor that has accompanied people’s displacement into the PoC, youth have limited opportunities to become men and
reach this ideal of “responsible adulthood.” Men are no longer able to provide for and protect their families, made worse by the complete disruption to peoples’ traditional livelihoods. Rural populations who previously relied on cultivation, pastoralism, or both have no space to farm and have been dispossessed of their land and livestock. Urban populations similarly have no chances for employment in a PoC context. With the physical restrictions for men leaving the PoC who are perceived to be “rebels,” and as such, risk murder, disappearance and torture, males in the Malakal site are rendered almost entirely idle, while the burden of responsibility for providing for the household has shifted wholly towards women. Though this is common in conflict-affected settings, the problem appears to be severe in the PoC given the risks presented by armed actors (and in some instances civilians) just outside of the UNMISS base. This has created conflicts between men and women while at the same time pushing women to engage in increasingly risky coping mechanisms. As discussed earlier, cognizant of the fact that their husbands, brothers and sons chance murder, women often leave the PoC recognizing that they may be raped. A man remarks:

“The feeling is bad, being a parent and someone with children...you are kept without doing anything because of fear for your life once you plan to go outside. We feel frustrated and depressed when you are unable and unproductive when it comes to taking good care of your family and doing things like we used to. In previous years, you are the one who runs the family, going to the farm, rearing animals and doing everything. But here I am just idle. You feel you have the will and energy, but...” (Interview-Male, Sector 3, 02/02/17)

This inability to live up to idealized norms of masculinity amongst South Sudanese men can lead them to channel their frustrations through violence and substance abuse. The links between men and women’s vulnerability in this situation cannot be underestimated. Not only are women forced to engage in increasingly perilous livelihood strategies, but they also expressed feelings of massive fatigue. A woman notes how:

“The situation here is a problem...For women it is okay, we can persevere. For men, it is really bad and this means that when they get money they will drink and their health is becoming weak and when they become sick, they die easily. The situation is really bad, especially for the men...Now...[women] are busy finding food and carrying heavy things and even if peace comes they will not have a good life for the future. Their body is exhausted...” (Interview-Woman, Sector 1, Block E, 07/02/17)

Sadly, there is no space for socializing and coming together to combat this dislocation, fractionalization and idleness in the Malakal PoC. Male youth spoke about the importance of having areas, such as the football pitch behind Medicines Sans Frontiers (MSF) in sector two where they could come together and socialize as friends, referencing the significance of space for coming together in such a way that would provide a more positive atmosphere than gathering on the roadside. Women alike also talked about the isolation they felt not being able to come together as they ordinarily would with other women and discuss the problems facing their communities, which they maintained would also help them overcome some of the traumatic memories associated with the war. As one woman stated:

“Each and every person is just isolated and people are coming together to discuss if there is problems in the community. People can come together and change their behavior, but now when people are isolated, each and every person has their own ideas and nowhere to share and now they are not feeling happy” (Interview-Woman, Sector 1, Block E, 07/02/17)
III. SAFETY AND SECURITY

“If you are idle and you don’t have anything to do, of course you steal even if you don’t have things. We are tempted to commit crimes not because we want to, but we need to survive” (FGD-Adult Males (Male Youth), Sector 3, 01/02/17)

Many of the above mentioned issues have had a palpable impact on safety and security in the Malakal PoC. As is commonly the case in camps for the displaced where there is a high density of people in a relatively confined geographic area and a dependency on external assistance for survival, intra-familial and spousal in-fighting, substance abuse and incidences of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) can become routine occurrences. As pointed out in past research on the PoCs, “the physical humanitarian space within which the displaced communities reside has been a key factor in the prevalence of criminality and insecurity.” The sheer scale of IDPs who sought refuge and protection at UNMISS at the start of the crisis in Malakal led to rather haphazard settlement patterns amongst those being relocated to various parts of the PoC since 2014, giving way to “[d]ense, congested, labyrinthine clusters of homes…erected on uneven swampy and flood prone ground” and contributing to the proliferation of crime and disputes as the families and communities turning to UNMISS for security clamored for access to space and services. At the time that the PoC was created there was also a lack of consideration for the security concerns of women and girls, such as the location of WASH facilities and adequate lighting; considerations that were not built into the initial site design, generating sizable protection concerns later on. Crime, including theft, physical violence and sexual assault, especially by male youth is deemed to be a substantial problem. Participants conveyed a significant sense of fear of being beaten, and in the case of females, being subjected to rape and other-related offenses at the hands of idle and often drunk youth in the evening hours – “[i]f you move at night you can easily have something happen to you, like you will be beaten” (FGD-Female Youth, Sector 3, 31/01/17). Given the initial issues with site design and the lack of space for better planning, for example, for gender disaggregated latrines, young women expressed reticence about going to the washrooms and bathing shelters, preferring instead to go near their shelters, making the already alarming hygiene issues in the PoC even worse. As one woman explained to the researcher during an interview: “Mostly it is young girls who are harassed. Youth fear elderly women unless they are drunk when they try things. This is why you take showers in your own place” (Interview-Female, Sector 3, 01/02/17).

Along these lines, a large share of the crime in the PoC was attributed to frustration, idleness and alcoholism amongst male youth. As exhibited by the quote from the male focus group discussion participant at the start of this section, in desperation people often turn to crime as a way to survive. With nothing to do and nowhere to go, male youth (and males more generally) were said to drink on the roadsides, becoming a disturbance to residents who fear traveling around the PoC at night – “[t]he problem is the drunkards, they can attack and beat you and if it gets late at night they become very difficult” (Interview, Female, Sector 3, 01/02/17). Youths who have few constructive venues for coming together end up gathering wherever they can find space and with no meaningful activities to engage in start to involve themselves in the aforementioned risky and aggressive behaviors. Lacking the opportunities to become full men and provide for themselves, relying solely on service providers to meet their basic needs, it was said by respondents that youth would steal, just to feel like they could access resources. As one man commented:

“When you see the PoC here, the residents are women. Up to now, they don’t know where their husbands and sons are and when you see here lack of opportunities there is no job when you see the assistance provided, it is only basics and...you know we are human beings so that is why...this makes...[the youth]
think to make alcohol and get money and they can provide children with things” (Interview-Male, Sector 2, 31/01/2017)

The nature of the shelters as temporary and constructed out of plastic sheeting has only aggravated the situation. In some instances the researcher had even heard of incidences of thieves entering shelters in the middle of the night by cutting the plastic sheeting and threatening people while they stole their property. Thieves were also said to take advantage of small spaces in highly congested areas, hiding in the small gaps between shelters to rob people passing by. The fact that thieves can take advantage of the “[d]ense, congested, labyrinthine clusters of homes,” shops and illegal shelters also makes it hard to apprehend criminals. This further reinforces the legal and policy challenges of dealing with crime on UNMISS bases. UNMISS technically has an obligation to investigate criminal cases carried out on their premises since they are under the exclusive control of the United Nations, however, the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) between UNMISS and the Government of South Sudan technically commits the UN to handing criminals over to the government. Yet, because the government and the SPLA-IG are perceived to be actively targeting the civilians living in the PoCs on account of their ethno-political affiliation with the “rebels,” handing over criminals could mean putting people in jeopardy of abuse and even death. It could also be a potential violation of principles of non-refoulement, which dictate that displaced persons have the right to be repatriated voluntarily. At the same time, with a mandate almost exclusively tied to civilian protection, UNMISS cannot set up a parallel justice system on it’s base and cannot take legal action against criminals with no executive mandate, or powers of arrest. The result has been a somewhat layered response to crime and insecurity. While the UN Police (UNPOL) endeavor to establish some appearance of rule of law, they are often understaffed and under-resourced, which is why the Mission created the CWG, made up of community members from the different sectors to police the camps, however, the CWGs often have little training and have been charged with reinforcing order in a way that more closely approximates vigilante justice. During the research it was even observed that some of the members of the CWG in sector one were under the age of eighteen with participants citing how the members of the CWG were often the very people perpetrating crimes in the PoC.

Protection

The lack of safety and security has combined to produce a number of serious protection concerns in the Malakal PoC. Not being able to draw on conventional networks of support due to the dislocation of families and communities that has accompanied life for people in the camp has intensified the vulnerability of already vulnerable groups. PSNs, such as the elderly and disabled spoke about how they had previously relied on their relatives to care for them, but how they were alone in the PoC, or their children had abandoned their duties as caregivers and were no longer respecting their elders. As one group of PSNs in sector two referenced:

“At the moment, there are some vulnerables who have relatives, or children who help support them because they don’t have somewhere to...earn...a living...[but] at the moment there are children who are very stubborn who cannot take care of the parents and it becomes hard for them and they try and move from place to place to find something” (FGD-PSNs, Sector 2, 30/01/17).

They also indicated that they occasionally faced harassment from other segments of the PoC population, particularly youth who viewed “PSNs” as being treated favorably by humanitarians in terms of service provision. As PSNs in sector one declared:
In some ways this reflects some of the more problematic aspects of long-standing humanitarian practice in South Sudan, such as the use of narrowly defined categories of beneficiaries, as opposed to recognizing the vulnerabilities of the whole of the society, \textsuperscript{lxii} generating conflicts that might not have otherwise existed. As discussed in the section on “Gender, Culture and Youth” peoples vulnerabilities in the PoC tend to be intimately linked. For instance, the risk of murder, disappearance and torture for men leaving the PoC causes women to engage in more and more precarious livelihoods strategies, leaving the camp to collect firewood where they are in danger of rape. Nevertheless, because of the mobility restrictions for the elderly and disabled, it can be quite difficult for PSNs to access services in the service area in sector two because of the significant distances that exist between certain blocks, or entire sectors and the primary health care units and other facilities. The same could also be said of female headed-households who have, in some cases, been placed with other households in communal shelters. These female-headed households then have to rely on the generosity and support of other families, which is not consistent, potentially opening them up to different forms of exploitation and abuse. As the same PSNs in sector 2 observed:

“The widows are living with no support from anybody and it is hard for people to care for them and right now they are just helped from neighbors...[who] see that condition is too bad...When we try and bring information that widows are needing help and then organizations [are] refusing – are these people not vulnerable?” (FGD-PSNs, Sector 2, 30/01/17)

As illustrated by Table 2 the proportion of females in the PoC is higher than their male counterparts, with a large number of female-headed households overall. Although some of these female-headed households may be second, or third wives given that an estimated one third of unions in Upper Nile were polygamous prior to the outbreak of the conflict in South Sudan in December 2013,\textsuperscript{lxiii} the specific needs of female-headed households and widows are being compromised by current conditions in the camp. The emphasis on “PSNs” as a catchall category of vulnerability appears to have undercut the conventional focus on the gender-related vulnerabilities of women and girls. A shift away from what has otherwise been an overreliance on gender essentialisms and the construction of vulnerable subjects of women and children in humanitarian action is welcome.\textsuperscript{lxiv} However, this does not seem to have been accompanied by an attendant change towards a more inclusive notion of vulnerability that recognizes the vulnerability of society as a whole, including men and boys, and the linkages between peoples vulnerability in a South Sudanese context.

As it is, females already face immense protection concerns inside the PoC. Women and girls continue to confront the risk of SGBV in and around WASH facilities. As highlighted in a rapid gender analysis completed by CARE in the Malakal PoC in 2015, after dark women often deal with harassment around the latrine areas, including “insults in congested areas along the roadside and especially when going to use latrines in other parts of the camp.”\textsuperscript{lxv} It is not just around the WASH facilities either. Apparently around areas where alcohol is being sold to local populations, females feared “meeting a drunkard at a corner, and you have nowhere to go and then you will be raped, especially around areas where they are selling alcohol” (FGD-Female Youth, Sector 3, 03/02/17). Against this backdrop of nighttime insecurity, women and girls have adopted some of their own coping mechanisms and strategies to avoid using the latrines and bathing shelters at night with women utilizing basins for defecating and urinating that are then emptied in the morning. But, this just augments the hygiene concerns already endemic in the camp. Furthermore, both partners and research participants expressed a growing concern with child sexual abuse. According to some respondents the perpetrators of such crimes were so-called
“drunkards” who had been rejected by the community, primarily unmarried male youth, who given their limited prospects for marriage would resort to force to have intercourse.

Although alcoholism and the associated sentiments of idleness, frustration and despondency might seem like “facile excuses”lxxvi for sexual violence, with the insecurity outside of the PoC and the dependency on external actors inside the camp, people can begin to channel their feelings of defeat into their relationships with fellow IDPs. As other research on South Sudan has identified, the traumatic experiences connected to the current conflict and peoples’ displacement can culminate in a sort of tension where people cite being unable to distinguish between the consequences of morally appropriate modes of behavior.lxxvii And despite the increased emphasis on psychosocial support (PSS) programming in conflict-affected environments, such activities have often excluded male members of society, whose trauma has been rationalized to be driving force behind SGBV.lxxviii It should be noted as well that, the process of displacement into the PoC and the resultant feelings of emasculation amongst males who can no longer live up to idealized norms of masculinity can trigger male members of the population to violently reinforce their lost sense of masculinity into their inter-personal relationships.lxxix

What’s more, privacy has become completely meaningless in the Malakal PoC. Females interviewed for the research felt a considerable amount of discomfort with the fact that they had nowhere to change their clothes and that people could peer into their shelters when they were getting undressed. As one woman claimed:

“I am not comfortable at all. You have no privacy. The other part is men and for you to change your clothes as a woman it is hard, if you remove someone will come and see you naked, until you can wait for darkness and then change your clothes” (Interview-Woman, Sector 3, Block B, 14/02/17)

Further to this, the privacy for engaging in even consensual sex is next to null, which seems to have two noteworthy consequences. The first is that many of the married women interviewed during the research felt that it was culturally inappropriate to have intercourse with their husbands within earshot of their neighbors. However, if they refused sex with their husbands, they said they could be beaten, or raped. One woman:

“When your husband needs to be in contact with you and the pressure [he] can beat you and force you to have sex” (FGD-Female Youth, Sector 2, 26/01/17)

Another woman:

“...[F]or you a woman, you feel shy, for him he will get annoyed. If you refuse to have sex with your husband, he will take it another way and that one will cause quarrels. You don’t want to have it because of privacy. When people first ran here, there were no tents. But still, the husbands were claiming to have sex with their wives in that situation and people were sleeping in the open...” (Interview-Female, Sector 2, 23/01/17)

Of course, marital rape is both socially and legally acceptable in South Sudan with an exemption for spousal rape built into the 2008 Penal Code. Patrilocal, bride-wealth based marriages where a man pays bride-wealth to a woman’s family in return for her hand in marriage, ordinarily in the form of cattle and livestock, also contributes to a view where men feel entitled to the sexual and reproductive services of women on account of the fact that they had “paid” for them. As numerous reports have made clear, the perception that women can be “bought” with the dowry economy in South Sudan acts as a justification for their mistreatment in the private sphere, with domestic violence and marital rape viewed “as an exercise of prerogative rather than an offense.”lxxx Nonetheless, this still represents a significant protection concern
for women. Second, people expressed concern about the impact that exposure to sexual relations amongst children was having, attributing such exposure to both child sexual abuse and underage sex.

Already, partners are struggling to establish child friendly spaces (CFSs) as a result of the shortage of physical space. With people's caregivers (mothers) leaving the PoC during the day in search of food, firewood and other items, this subjects children to neglect. Although most people appear primarily concerned with the hygiene and health consequences of children playing in drainage ditches and/or eating and gathering materials to sell in the PoC from the solid waste areas, mothers interviewed for the research also communicated apprehension about their kids being left vulnerable to other forms of violence and abuse in their absence – “[w]hen I am in Malakal Town I am very nervous, anybody can decide to beat them. It is not good...” (Interview-Woman, Sector 2, Block U, 10/02/17). Child Protection (CP) partners said that they could only work in very small areas within sector one with mobile child friendly spaces and while sectors two and four have protected compounds for CFSs, the space is still restricted when it comes to permitting facilitators to provide recreational and community events. Notwithstanding the fact that less than half of the population of school-aged children are able to access education due to the lack of space for schools and temporary learning spaces in the PoC, many parents indicated that they were afraid to send their children the sometimes long walking distances between certain blocks, or entire sectors and the educational facilities, especially in the rainy season when it is hard for the kids to walk.

“‘As parents, the lack of space it impacts our children in terms of playing space. That is why you find children coming to the drainage and playing in the dirty water, which is not safe” (FGD-Adult Males, Sector 2, 26/01/17)

IV. HUMANITARIAN SERVICE DELIVERY

Properly providing services to the populations in need in the camp has been near impossible for humanitarian agencies, intensifying the protection concerns of the IDPs in the Malakal PoC and furthering the already declining resilience amongst families and communities. Humanitarians have more, or less been forced into a position of striving for non-standards in their work due to the constraints presented by the lack of physical space. As indicated in the introduction of the report, what became most apparent through the research is that the impact of congestion is not confined to any one sector. Rather, the lack of space for genuine service delivery reaches across and links many of the problems being experienced by agencies operating in different areas, such as WASH, protection, education and health. The lack of even the most fundamental of livelihoods and skills-acquisition work, let alone vocational training for the youth, for example, are leading to the aforementioned feelings of idleness, frustration and disillusionment, which can influence violent and risky behaviors, presenting protection concerns, as well as mental health concerns. As reiterated throughout this report, an issue related to WASH is never just a WASH issue in a setting characterized by a lack of physical humanitarian space – it is a protection issues as illustrated by the discussion above on SGBV at the latrine areas, it is a health issue and so on and so forth. For the population as a whole the limitations in providing services just becomes a symbol of their continuous suffering and a visible sign of the poor conditions they find themselves in, contributing to feelings of a loss of control and disempowerment.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

The WASH sector in many ways exemplifies the intersectional nature of space and the problems that overcrowding and congestion cause for the PoC population in Malakal. Water and sanitation are essential to survival in camp settings where people become susceptible to diseases, such as diarrheal infections passed on via fecal matter, or vectors associated with solid waste and stagnant water in
displacement-related settings. At present, humanitarian service providers in Malakal are facing significant challenges related to overcrowding, especially in sectors one and four where they have not been able to construct suitably dimensioned water points in relation to the number of people living per block and with many shelters constructed so close to the water points it makes an expansion near impossible. WASH partners have had to make requests to camp management to move shelters onto decommissioned latrines in order to build new latrines once they have collapsed, or are full, however, due to the nature of the black cotton soil, it can be dangerous to move peoples shelters onto recently decommissioned areas that are vulnerable to collapse. Residents interviewed during the research also felt unease with having been placed on an area that had formerly been used as a lavatory. In more congested blocks, shelters are sometimes less than ten meters apart from the latrine block causing the latrine and in some instances, part of the shelter to collapse. Being in such close proximity to the latrine is not only a safety issue. For people living near latrine blocks, the smell emanating from the toilet is just another sign of the deteriorating living conditions. As one man living in sector one noted:

"The main issue...of the latrines...is the hygiene of the latrines. It is very close to the residential areas and the smell is no good, but of course they cannot do anything. That is how the situation is in the PoC" (Interview-Man, Sector 1, Block G, 07/02/17)

Understandably, people are also said to feel uncomfortable going to the toilet knowing that nearby shelters can discern when they have diarrhea, or have become sick. Sector one was the first and now most populous sector in the PoC and has seen the proliferation of illegal shelters with people clamoring for space during the initial relocation in 2014 and then with subsequent waves of displacement into the Malakal PoC in 2015. People built homes and shops in any open area they could find, including WASH corridors. Problematically, however, agencies are no longer in a position to build new latrines in order to reach the recommended number of twenty persons per latrine. They are also using manual pumps due to the lack of space to bring in desludging trucks; a time consuming process that is both costly and exposes the casual laborers employed from within the PoC to health and hygiene issues.

These problems are even more serious during the rainy season. In the rainy season, people express difficulty reaching the latrines, reinforcing the proclivity to defecate and urinate near their shelters, possibly engendering problems relating to the spread of disease. As one woman put it: "For...[us] it is hard for us to move to the latrines in the rainy season so we defecate in a pot or something inside the home and then bring it there [to the latrine]" (Interview-Woman, Sector 2, Block T, 10/02/17). There is also no space for drainages running from people’s homes to the primary drainage, at times generating flooding in peoples’ shelters. Humanitarian partners revealed dissatisfaction with the fact that they could not design drainages in a way that was more sustainable. Because of the black cotton soil in Malakal flooding becomes a problem when it rains as the soil simply retains moisture, making it poorly suited to construction, or foundations. As underscored in other research on the PoC, the land UNMISS was provided with was ordinarily swampy and flood prone, which did not make for the easy settlement of IDPs and the creation of what are in essence full-fledged IDP camps on UN bases. The upshot of this is that the primary drainages have to be incredibly wide and deep, which is especially true when considering the flat terrain that the PoC was developed on. In some parts of the camp it is not possible to build drainages that are up to standard because of the absence of physical space, which contributes to the formation of stagnant water. For the individuals and households living in the PoC there is also no space to dig small drainages running from their shelter area to the primary drainage and when they endeavor to do so it can provoke conflicts with neighbors over space. As a group of men during a focus group in sector two pointed out:
“If it rains and the place is flooded and we dig drainage to the main challenge and you pass to a neighbor’s home and it can be a quarrel and they will say that you have made a drainage close to my home and then he may push you and say you have dug into that area” (FGD-Males, Sector 2, 15/02/17)

**TABLE 3(a). WASH IN THE MALAKAL PoC**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Liters of H2O Distributed/ Day</th>
<th>Liters of H2O Distributed/Perso n/Day</th>
<th>Total Functional Latrines</th>
<th>Latrines/Person</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sector 1</td>
<td>13,745</td>
<td>307,286</td>
<td>22.4</td>
<td>368</td>
<td>37.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sector 2</td>
<td>8,357</td>
<td>140,143</td>
<td>16.8</td>
<td>335</td>
<td>24.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sector 3</td>
<td>3,521</td>
<td>66,000</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>19.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sector 4</td>
<td>4,936</td>
<td>77,868</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>25.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>30,559</strong></td>
<td><strong>591,297</strong></td>
<td><strong>18.4</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,071</strong></td>
<td><strong>27</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TABLE 3(b). WASH IN THE MALAKAL PoC**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Total Functional Bathing Shelters</th>
<th>Bathing Shelters/Person</th>
<th>Number of Hygiene Promoters</th>
<th>Hygiene Promotion Ration (Hygiene Promoters/IDP)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sector 1</td>
<td>13,745</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>67.4</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>1:404</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sector 2</td>
<td>8,357</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>49.2</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1:522</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sector 3</td>
<td>3,521</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>64.0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1:503</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sector 4</td>
<td>4,936</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>67.6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1:493.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>30,559</strong></td>
<td><strong>502</strong></td>
<td><strong>62.1</strong></td>
<td><strong>67</strong></td>
<td><strong>1:480.7</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Then there are the linkages between the shortage of physical space for appropriate WASH facilities and the protection and safety of the PoC population. While some efforts are currently being made to modify latrines for PSNs, partners have not been able to build child friendly latrines.\(^{lxxxix}\) Children are said to be frightened of the adult latrines because of the lack of lighting and the latrine hole size.\(^{xc}\) Both parents and children purportedly prefer for kids to then defecate and urinate in, or near their shelter, once again, posing hygiene related concerns as the basins being used as a toilet are often left in the open. Another set of respondents from sector one:

“...[T]he child will defecate right outside and people will just leave it and that one causes major problems and when you try and talk to them, they will say you be in your shelter, don’t tell me to do this, everyone has his own shelter – it is affecting our life...if you cook and leave food out there and the fly will come and cause problems for us...” (FGD-Females, Sector 1, 17/02/17)

As detailed in the section on protection, there are also the oft-noted concerns with respect to SGBV at the latrines and bathing shelters. In any camp setting, communal WASH facilities enhance women and girls vulnerability to all manners of offenses, limiting safe access for female populations.\(^{xci}\) The Malakal PoC, as discussed previously, is no exception. Yet, because of the lack of physical humanitarian space, WASH partners find it difficult, if not impossible to place male and female latrines and bathing shelters separate from each other, opening women up to various forms of sexualized and gendered violence.\(^{xcii}\) In January 2017 it was said that there were two children who were sexually assaulted at the latrines in the PoC.\(^{xciii}\) Not only is there no clear demarcation of WASH facilities, agencies have also had to build latrine blocks, adding to congestion and effecting visibility.\(^{xciv}\) These areas then become opportune places for groups of male youth to gather, making it unfeasible for women, children and others to access facilities.\(^{xcv}\) As the
Education

Unlike WASH that is essential to the survival of displaced persons, especially during the beginning stages of an emergency, the educational needs of displaced persons can sometimes be overshadowed by space and other-related considerations. If and when space has been allocated for the construction of schools, or temporary learning spaces (TLS) in the Malakal PoC, the lack of physical room makes it near impossible to integrate the very real child protection concerns that come with sending children from one sector to another. Prior to the conflict, Upper Nile was actually one of the most literature areas in South Sudan. Now, peoples’ education has come to a screeching halt in the PoC. After the December 2016 verification and registration exercise in the Malakal site, only forty-six per cent of school aged children were said to be able to access education programmes in the camp. In the most populated sector, sector one only sixteen per cent of children were going to school. Due to overcrowding in the classrooms, the number of children per classroom was also well above the preferred thirty to forty pupils per teacher in a chronic crisis, leading to an associated decline in the quality of education for the already limited number of children who are able to access education, with some classrooms purportedly containing over one hundred children. It is not for lack of trying on the part of parents in the PoC who want nothing more to educate their kids. Women claimed that when they had gone to register their children, they had been notified that there was not enough space.

“In two kids who are of school going age and I took them for registration...in sector 4, but I was informed that they had stopped registration and that the number is full. For me the issue is the number of schools is not enough to take all the children to the PoC (Interview-Female, Sector 4, 06/02/17)

Partners have also not been able to establish the requisite WASH facilities in the temporary learning spaces in the PoC due to the lack of space and have been grappling with how to even provide appropriate latrines and hand-washing points, both in terms of quality and figures.

Then there are no secondary schools in the PoC, or even vocational training centers. Although agencies have made efforts to create accelerated learning programs (ALPs), which cater primarily to persons aged eighteen to twenty-five, the majority of adolescents have had to put their education on a standstill. This has the most perceptible impact on youth in the PoC, many of who had finished primary school prior to their displacement. A number of youth that were interviewed for the research noted how having access to education and/or vocational training would help them envisage a future for themselves outside of a PoC context.

“We sit in one place from 6am to 6pm. We have nowhere we can go. We are thinking of going and studying, but there is no secondary. We are young men and we want a future, but we have none. We have completed primary and we don’t have any secondary, which is really bad for our minds” (FGD-Male Youth, Sector 1, 17/02/17)

As Save the Children designated in recent report, education is often a priority for conflict-affected people in South Sudan and if interventions are going to remain accountable to the populations that they serve, they need to take such priorities into account. Despite perceptions that expanding educational services in the PoC site could mean producing another so-called “pull factor,” as is well-known education
can actually help families and communities develop stronger coping mechanisms, enhancing their ability to recover from the ongoing shocks produced by this conflict and aiding communities in preparing and planning for rebuilding their lives post-displacement.\textsuperscript{xxc} In view of the protection concerns that characterize life for the IDPs in the PoC, education also supplies humanitarian partners with the means for reaching out to younger populations about their own safety during crises.\textsuperscript{c} As suggested in the introduction, while it is important to respond to the immediate needs of the population in the PoC, in order to promote the long-term recovery of the population and reduce peoples dependency on UNMISS and humanitarian agencies, we need to think more critically about linking development and emergency assistance – a lesson often forgotten in South Sudan,\textsuperscript{ci} given the limited emergency lens often applied to interventions in the country.

**Food Security and Livelihoods**

The same criticism could be lodged when it comes to the previously referenced lack of physical space for basic livelihoods and skills-acquisition work, let alone income-generating activities (IGAs). Peoples’ livelihoods have been completely razed by fighting in Upper Nile and the displacement of large swaths of the population into the Malakal PoC. In many ways, the current conflict has directly targeted peoples’ livelihoods and food security with the looting of civilian livestock, the razing of crops and what has now been referred to as the purposeful starvation of populations in part of South Sudan.\textsuperscript{cii} In the PoC, however, there is no space for cultivating, or initiating small businesses to make an earning to supplement the food and other non-food items (NFI) being supplied by humanitarian service providers. This has undermined traditional forms of adaptation amongst the local population who during past wars and famines in South Sudan in the 1980s and 1990s had apparently adopted differing livelihood strategies, diversifying crop production, staggering planting and using drought resistant varieties.\textsuperscript{ciii} As a group of PSNs stated:

\begin{quote}
“The situation is very hard for us. We have lost our belongings. We had cultivated crops and some of us had goats and cattle and most of these cattle’s have been seized by the army, so there are few who have the chance of selling things to other people...to sustain themselves...” (FGD-PSNs, Sector 4, 06/02/17)
\end{quote}

The population is now dependent on external actors for everything from physical security to food security. Unless people leave the PoC, or are lucky enough to be employed by UNMISS, or agencies, there is little hope of making up for the gaps in service provision, forcing individuals and households to rely on increasingly dangerous coping mechanisms, or livelihoods strategies. Some people are now leaving the PoC to farm near the riverbank during the day where the chance violent encounters with armed actors. It was also said by some that those cultivating on the banks of the White Nile are being charged a levy, or tax. While some people were cultivating the land outside of golf gate, between sector two and the humanitarian hub, as of early 2017 UNMISS allegedly closed the gate to the IDP population for security reasons.

As one woman put it:

\begin{quote}
“...I would have planted tomatoes and okra. Or, if there was a safe place outside...as we were hearing this morning, there is gunshots and it has made people to fear...[they] cannot move outside because of this. I really wish there was a place to cultivate and do something for myself...now I just sit and have nothing to do...” (Interview-Woman, Sector 1, Block F, 09/02/17)
\end{quote}

A man correspondingly says:
“...[I]n case there is peace and...we can move to villages...where we can cultivate freely and feed families. As for now, if you want to cultivate outside, you are restricted and the government will come in and say you have to pay...” (FGD-Adult Males, Sector 1, 23/01/17)

Women (and men) inside the PoC are now selling firewood and other items they collect from outside, while others have been able to start small businesses with the markets as the only supplementary livelihood and income possibility for populations. However, there is a scarcity of space for opening small shops and restaurants, made worse by the lack of cash circulating throughout markets in the Malakal camp, particularly since the free-floating of the South Sudanese Pound (SSP) in December 2015 when inflation skyrocketed and the economy more, or less collapsed. People who try to sell items in the PoC, such as firewood expressed how they would sometimes be unable to sell their goods to fellow IDPs who do not have earnings to purchase items for sale in the camp. Though some are able to access start-up capital for small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) from family, or friends in the PoC when and if there is space, many people also have to resort to selling items from food, or NFI distributions, placing a further strain on household resources.

There is also significant competition over space on the roadsides in the PoC where people sell their goods, or in the main market in sector one, sometimes resulting in conflicts. As another report on the PoCs indicated, because of the security situation outside of the PoC in Malakal and the fact that UNMISS have refused to extend the perimeter to include an expanded market area since the Mission perceived such an expansion as being above and beyond their civilian protection mandate, people have set up shops within the site wherever they can find space and there are continuous contests over the deconstruction of illegal shops on the roadsides and along access roads. This reinforces the aforementioned hygiene issues by making it hard to get the desludging trucks in to empty latrines. Unauthorized shops are also being built on top of drainages, becoming a health hazard by precluding the effective maintenance of drainages. Not only are contests over space and the resulting proliferation of illegal shops and street vendors further narrowing the roads in the PoC making it difficult for trucks and vehicles to pass through certain areas of the site, but the functioning of the local political economy in the PoC where land technically belonging to UNMISS is bought, sold and rented, makes it even harder for people to earn a livelihood. Female informal laborers, especially those making tea, having small restaurants, or selling firewood noted how they would have to rent spaces in the market, frequently for around 30 to 50 SSP per day. Some women also announced how they had tried to set up a place to sell their firewood, or other items in empty places on the roadside and had been extorted by youth who demanded a rent of sorts in exchange for use of the space.

Of course, the markets in the PoC and peoples income and resources access are incredibly dependent on the security situation outside. Not only does ongoing insecurity limit people’s ability to leave the camp perimeters to cultivate, such was experienced in January 2017 during the fighting on the west bank, but the blockading of access to the west bank and now destruction of the entire area limits the number of goods entering the market as many items in the main market in sector one were being supplied from Wau Shilluk. Critically, the absence of livelihoods and IGAs for the local population in the PoC was referenced as a considerable source of idleness and frustration. Although UNMISS worries that setting up a camp with structures, including livelihoods activities and a market would simply supplement the dependency of IDPs on the Mission and the humanitarian agencies providing services inside the camp, this is not the case. As stated in the introduction, by not enabling people to cultivate, or provide for themselves, external actors are actually reproducing the dependency of the population and undermining peoples’ ability to recover from ongoing shocks, including a collapsing economy and increasing food insecurity in the country.

Health and Mental Health
The issues related to the limitations in service provision with the dearth of physical humanitarian space in the Malakal PoC are having a noticeable influence on peoples’ health and mental well-being. Not being able to access suitable services is adding to the feelings of disempowerment and the loss of control that people feel in their lives being trapped in the PoC and being able to do little about their situation given the security conditions outside. When asked about the impact of congestion on peoples’ health specifically, many PoC residents referenced the ease with which diseases, particularly communicable diseases spread both within and between households, as well as the impact of the lack of ventilation in the shelters, which was contributing to respiratory infections. Then there is the hygiene issues discussed above where stagnant water and open defecation and urination practices have rendered people vulnerable to diarrheal infections vis-à-vis fecal matter, or vectors. Partners have, along these lines, been highlighting the potential connections between the high levels of congestion in certain blocks and sectors and the spread of acute watery diarrhea (AWD), malaria and respiratory tract infections (RTI). This is not surprising. As of 2015 there was already concern that in the more congested areas of the PoC site there was also a higher number of children under five being treated for diseases like malaria and pneumonia. In addition to the spread of disease in such close quarters where hygiene and health considerations are sometimes brushed aside in light of the other problems faced by the PoC population, there are also access issues with regard to health care for vulnerable groups like the elderly and disabled who revealed that they had appreciable difficulties in getting to the clinics in the sector two, which was especially hard if they were weak and did not have family members to help them. As a group of PSNs in sector one noted:

"The issues in terms of reaching the clinic are that they have people who are crippled and...cannot walk and there is no vehicle to help them move. Now we have to use wheelbarrow and that is not good and...is a challenge, especially at night...there is supposed to be an ambulance but it is not coming” (FGD-PSNs, Sector 1, 24/01/17)

A man from sector 4 similarly comments during a focus group:

"An additional medical facility should be constructed...if someone falls sick at night you may have to carry [that person]...from sector 4 to IOM, IMC and MSF. It is a long distance because there is no means of transport and people have to carry someone who is badly off” (FGD-Adult Males, Sector 4, 02/02/17)

That being said, one of the most blatant consequences of the lack of space and the resultant impact that such congestion has on safety and security, service access and general quality of life, is on peoples’ mental health. As referenced before, the population in the Malakal PoC, much like other areas of the country has experienced continuous trauma, bearing witness to mass atrocities and being driven from their homes only to find themselves dependent on external actors for physical security and meeting their most basic needs. It is important to note, as well that, what is now South Sudan has undergone decades of conflict since Sudan attained its independence from the British colonial administration in 1956. Indeed, as should be clear from the “Context and Background” section, the now three-year old civil war is just one of many violent episodes in the south with even previously “peaceful” periods being marred with hostilities. The result, as a past 2015 study pointed out, is high levels of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) that are on par with some of the worst war zones in the world. In fact, forty-one per cent of respondents interviewed as part of the 2015 study showed symptoms consistent with PTSD; numbers that are comparable to the documented rates observed after the Genocides in Rwanda and Cambodia. People who were displaced were also much more likely to show signs of trauma, especially those in a PoC setting with men forty-five per cent more likely to exhibit symptoms of the diagnosis than women. In some ways this is not surprising. Displacement has led to feelings of emasculation amongst
men, particularly in the PoCs where the restrictions on freedom of movement due to the insecurity outside means that they cannot live up to their traditional gender roles—a loss of identity that has been severe.

In separate research on the PoCs in Bentiu, Bor and Juba, numerous respondents explained that it was not just the events of the war and their displacement that had led to trauma, but also the nature and duration of their displacement into the PoCs. The report found that it was not always the process of being driven from their homes as such that had contributed to trauma, but instead, the sensation of being stuck in one location without being able to leave. When asked how the lack of space was impacting their own and other peoples’ lives in the Malakal PoC, those interviewed for the research described how they felt trapped in a prison, likening their situation to animals, or livestock waiting in a pen to be slaughtered if they leave, which seemed to be a factor influencing feelings of idleness, frustration, anger and aggression. As one youth put it:

“It is very hard here. Here is worse than a prison. Even in prison you have some clothes to change into, but here you only have what you came with it is really hard when you are not working….A person in prison is in a better situation” (Interview-Male Youth, Sector 1, Block B, 09/02/17)

A woman likewise comments:

“It is bad. It is not good for...[just] and...it is affecting my mentality. I am feeling like there is no solution to this problem because it is getting worse. We thought that things would normalize and for us to go out of this place, but it is just getting worse like what has happened some days back [referring to the fighting on the west bank in January/February 2017]. There is no solution we have seen. We are still suffering and there is no solution” (Interview-Woman, Sector 1, Block D, 08/02/17)

It is not just feeling hemmed into this geographically confined space that is affecting individuals, families and communities in the PoC. There are also the more indirect impacts of the lack of space. People are not able to cope with the stress of normal circumstances and are constantly coming into confrontation with their family members and their neighbors with no physical space for themselves to get away from the strains and anxieties linked to their current situation. The fighting in early 2017 compounded the problem. Many people in the PoC had family members who had stayed on the west bank, or had left the PoC at some point and crossed the river. Physically hearing the clashes targeting the areas around Wau Shilluk with the sounds of heavy weapons fire appeared as though it was having a negative impact on the PoC population. When asked how the recent fighting was affecting them and others in their block, for example, many people spoke about how ongoing violence was causing people to fight and become angry as they searched to vent their feelings of desolation outwards.

In such an environment it is not unexpected that people, especially males would turn to substance abuse and alcoholism, which many people attribute to escalating violence between people in the camp. More concerning, however, are the growing worries about suicide. As has been observed in the other PoCs in South Sudan since 2015, self-harm and suicide and the potential for it, are said to be a problem on UNMISS bases. A number of people who we spoke during the research referenced suicide in the context of economic deprivation and not being able to provide for themselves, as well as how disputes with family members and neighbors had become constant and with nowhere to get away, people would rather injure themselves. This is exacerbated by the way that communities in the camp treat wrongdoers where people are not able to escape from the blame, devastating and overwhelming individuals. As one woman from sector two added:

“It is affecting people’s minds seriously...The situation is causing people to commit suicide. It happened in 2015 a certain boy decided to commit suicide because a women was disturbing him and quarreling with him throughout and so he cannot rest (Interview-Woman, Sector 2, Block T, 10/02/17)
Another woman:

“Staying together in one small space, especially for the youth who cannot move outside, it is disturbing them mentally. That is why they can kill themselves. They are staying idle, there is nothing to do and they are feeling useless. They cannot go and find something to do – to go get firewood, we have children around us crying and we feel like we cannot do anything so they will decide it is better to kill themselves. It is really affecting peoples’ minds to stay in a small space and having nothing to do, especially for people with children because they know they cannot support themselves” (Interview-Woman, Sector 3, Block D, 14/02/17)

A separate woman:

“Of course if you are living [here], people who are shouting day and night, you will go mad. You can even think [to]…kill yourself. Everyday people are causing problems for you. Everyday, everyday” (FGD-Women, Sector 3, 16/02/17)

While space may not be the cause of thoughts, or actions of self-harm, it has definitely undermined the ability of the population in the PoC to cope with their situation. People inevitably reach a breaking point where they are exposed to the horrid living conditions inside the camp and knowing about ongoing insecurity outside, are not able to leave. When people first arrived in the PoC, many of them had witnessed, or experienced a traumatic event having seen the death of a relative, having their livelihoods destroyed and having to run from their homes. Now, people have been in the camp for over three years in many cases, causing feelings of anxiety, distress and hopelessness to accumulate.

V. PERCEPTIONS OF HUMANITARIAN SERVICE DELIVERY

The lack of physical space for humanitarian service delivery and the related depreciation in the living conditions and quality of life for the IDPs in the Malakal PoC is feeding into negative perceptions of service delivery, particularly amongst those in more congested areas with communal shelters, such as sector four. As one man from sector four stated:

“I wanted sector four to be built like sector one…so women and children can be separate and they can be divided between male family members and female members, not the same way as a church…the services…are concentrate[d] in sector two…if you want to see a clinic they are here in sector two…there is no any other clinic from other areas. All of these services should be more scattered” (Interview-Male, Sector 4, 02/02/17)

The fact that the majority of services are concentrated in the service blocks in sector two not only limits access for other sectors and blocks, but it also leads to perceptions of discrimination with the small Nuer population being located in sector two and the Shilluk occupying the other parts of sector two and the other sectors. Humanitarian partners felt as though the general lack of space was not only curbing their ability to meet minimum humanitarian standards, but also compromising their impartiality. This makes it near impossible for camp management agencies to deal with space issues since many people will reference inadequate space management by humanitarians and UNMISS as the source of some of the problems in the PoC. This produces a sort of vicious cycle wherein the lack of space negatively influences the capacity of agencies to deliver services, which negatively influences the relationship between humanitarian service providers and beneficiaries, eventually precluding the possibility of dealing
with the issue, or at least making it incredibly demanding. It also gives way to perceptions that partners have no follow through, for instance, with the dismantling of illegal shelters that they see as not being implemented without realizing the difficulties that camp management faces in negotiating over space; difficulties that derive, in part, from the negative perceptions associated with the limitations in service access.

The situation as a whole permits agency staff to be used as a pawn in the local political economy of land ownership in the PoC with people referring to the fact that “this is the land of the kawajias (foreigners)” as a way to absolve themselves for responsibility for contributing to congestion by building in empty spaces on WASH corridors, or for extending into the demarcated area of another shelter, with the land belonging to camp management and UNMISS when it is convenient for one or another party to a dispute. Then when camp management comes to deal with the issue, it can cause conflicts with certain groups. While demarcating the site for the setup of communal shelters in sector four, for example, a group of Shilluk youth allegedly came and claimed that the land the UNMISS base and PoC were standing on was the rightful land of the Shilluk, while asking why the Dinka had been provided with family tents while they had been given communal tents.

Causes of Congestion and Constraints to Dealing with Congestion

The difficulties of managing the limited physical humanitarian space that people have to work with in the Malakal site cannot be easily separated from the causes of congestion. Various respondents cited one of the foremost causes of congestion to be the successive waves of new arrivals in the PoC between 2014 and 2015 who had initially integrated into families and then built in any open/unoccupied space they could find, particularly in sector one. It goes without saying, that the construction of illegal shelters and extensions for household activities, including cooking are only supplementing the high levels of congestion where it becomes almost impossible to walk through certain blocks. More important in terms of internal dynamics on site, however, are local level politics and the economy in the PoC where everything can be bought, sold and rented, producing private interests that are not easily overrode for the purpose of making the space more livable for all of the camp residents. As mentioned in the section on food security and livelihoods, many of the shops in the PoC are rented from “land owners,” apparently those who first settled in the PoC. But, this gives landowners a financial incentive to block the dismantling of illegal shelters. This was illustrated when there was an attempt to relocate people from part of sector one to sector two in order to make space for an additional educational facility. People said they would relocate only if the shops in that particular area of sector two were removed, however, it was said by one key informant that one of the top political leaders in the camp was collecting rent from the shop owners, leading camp management to be violently threatened when they came to dismantle the shops.

Local leaders and other groups in the PoC, such as the youth already try to assert their authority in relation to agencies, attempting to demonstrate their power and position by having an authoritative say over external actors in the camp. In some ways this harks back to the chaotic early days of the crisis where IDPs were sleeping in any area they could find with little in the way of organization, necessitating the establishment of camp leadership structures to generate order in the PoCs. In Malakal this is the Peace and Security Council (PSC) with leaders representing their location in the camp, such as the blocks and sectors with people selected on the basis of their positions as traditional leaders as one form or another before the war. But, this has been only partially successful. As indicated earlier, the youth already feel massively disenfranchised by their local leaders who they do not necessarily perceive to be legitimate. Yet, the PSC and block leaders are the only structure that humanitarians have to rely on when trying to deal with space-related issues where they end up inadvertently creating additional conflicts, relying on somewhat outdated and distorted assumptions about who has legitimacy in the context.

Then there are external dynamics encompassing the broader conflict and the relationship between UNMISS and the South Sudan government who continue to view the PoCs as a “fifth column” for the
opposition and want IDPs to leave the PoC sites. Even during the initial stages of the crisis in 2013 and 2014 the relationship between the government and UNMISS was reported to be in significant decline as the Mission was accused of supporting anti-government forces with hostile statements apparently made by senior government officials and the movement of UNMISS personnel increasingly restricted—a relationship that has further deteriorated with calls for a Regional Protection Force (RPF) following the clashes in Juba in July 2016. On the Mission side, as other reports have made clear, final-decision-making with regard to what happens to the PoC rests with UNMISS who are legally responsible for what occurs on their bases. By other accounts, humanitarians needing more space for their services feared that not abiding by the diktats of the Mission personnel, especially those on the civilian side and Relief, Reintegration and Protection (RRP) would entail their removal from the PoCs, leading to a further decline in the availability of services to civilians in need. While it is debated whether the PoC sites are obstructing the Mission’s capacity to carry out its civilian protection mandate, or whether the PoCs can be seen as an exemplary instance of civilian protection, UNMISS continues to maintain that the PoC sites are temporary and that additional space would create another “pull factor” enhancing peoples’ dependency on the Mission. Under most circumstances, expansions of the UNMISS bases also require an agreement between the Mission and the government, as well as permission from the landowner and requires approval from the highest echelons of the Mission in Juba. In a Malakal context, people have argued that the exodus of Dinka IDPs after February 2016 and the decrease in the overall size of the population by around 17,000 means that space is no longer an issue. Yet, this ignores that past expansions did not consider humanitarian standards and were not adequately designed in the first instance due to the lack of space, increasing health and protection concerns, which have become more damaging as time has gone on.

VI. EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Right now in the Malakal PoC there is finite space for contingency planning in the case of an influx of additional IDPs. Had people attempted to cross the river when clashes broke out on the west bank in January and February 2017 and fled to the PoC, there would have been very few spaces for new households’. There is also a lack of room to deal with a potential influx from Malakal Town and as we have seen “South Sudan’s turbulence is akin to the chaotic structure of a stream of water from a tap: unpredictable from moment to moment, but retaining its basic structure over time,” meaning that a possible attack on Malakal Town by the opposition is not out of the question. While people interviewed in Malakal Town remained adamant that if fighting broke out between the SPLA-IG and SPLA-IO they would not seek protection at the PoC in light of what happened in February 2016 when there was a mass departure of Dinka from the PoC it became clear that people did not feel safe in Malakal Town in the case of renewed hostilities, specifically women. As a group of elderly Dinka women in Malakal town stated during a FGD:

“On behalf of our security, we are putting confidence on UN because they are the ones protecting us and they are the one who is providing services. So on behalf of security it will be you who can guide...we have nowhere to go – rebels on that side, rebels on that side” (FGD-Women, Malakal Town, 23/02/17)

Female youth similarly proclaim:

“...[P]lease make us a protection site here in Malakal we are not trusting they government, they can run anytime. Why I am saying this one is the war re-erupting our children will be killed...so it is good for you to make us our own protection site...We need to stay away from the SPLA because when there is a gun shot it will target on one side...when the war happens it will happen against us Dinka...Malakal has been
captured many times and so the secret that they [the SPLA] will not tell us and they will not tell us the details of the situation on the ground…” (FGD-Female Youth, Malakal Town, 22/02/17)

This could feasibly push Dinka Padang populations into the PoC in search of protection, particularly women and children, resulting in inter-communal tensions between the Shilluk and Dinka populations on site. Notwithstanding ongoing conflict on the west bank at the time of writing in March 2017 and changing conflict dynamics in Upper Nile, which have seen a possible weakening of an under-resourced SPLA-IO, at present, worst case scenario analyses for the Malakal catchment area have predicted that there could be a conflict in Upper Nile that sees the SPLA-IO attack positions on either side of the Nile, effectively surrounding the town and pushing the Dinka to look elsewhere for protection.\textsuperscript{cxxx} While this could be another location all together, if it is in the PoCs, a large influx will put a strain on humanitarian supplies at a time when getting supplies into Malakal would be difficult due to the cancellation of barge and flight movements due to fighting.\textsuperscript{cxxxii} With violence carrying on and news of alleged atrocities on either side, or possible celebrations by one or the other side, anger between the groups in the PoC could erupt.\textsuperscript{cxxxiii} In this context, perimeter incidences could increase with infringements by armed groups, beginning with shots fired into the PoC and increasing attacks on IDPs who will need to venture outside the PoC to collect food and firewood and other items to meet their basic needs.\textsuperscript{cxxxiv}

Initially, the idea was to hold IDPs just outside of Kilo Gate (see Map 3 below) for a period of 24-72 hours in order to gain a better understanding of the situation before bringing IDPs onto the base. There has also been discussion about moving people to the proposed helicopter runway pad behind the humanitarian hub near Kilo Gate in Map 3 below. However, this has raised concerns amongst humanitarians about placing the humanitarian hub, which includes both international and national staff from different South Sudanese ethnic groups in the middle of inter-communal tensions. Shilluk youth interviewed for the research indicated that they would not sit by idly if people from Malakal Town, primarily the Dinka came to the PoC and it is possible that UNMISS, despite their best efforts, may be unable to contain a possible attack from mobilized Shilluk youth in the PoC. This would not only put civilians at massive risk, but would also endanger humanitarians, in particular national staff, putting a potential further strain on supplies with the possible looting of wear-houses. As one older male youth declared:

\begin{quote}
"If someone kills your brother and nothing happens to him and then what do you do...so we will deal with it in our own way...They left as enemies and you don’t expect them to come as friends” (FGD-CWG, Sector 1, 22/01/17)
\end{quote}

People already do not feel protected by UNMISS in the PoC who the population understandably views as having failed to safeguard them in February 2016 when armed elements associated with the SPLA-IG entered the camp and killed and injured people, causing new displacement and resulting in the destruction a large number of shelters. Many of those interviewed felt that UNMISS peacekeepers were/are more concerned with protecting themselves than the civilians who fled to the Malakal base and admitted that if another incident occurred in the PoC they would not entrust UNMISS peacekeepers with their safety.

Finally, the PoCs in South Sudan can easily become a microcosm for larger political and military developments in the country, which is particularly accurate in Malakal. While the Shilluk and Dinka had been able to put aside historical conflicts and grievances during the initial stages of the current civil war on account of Joseph Olonyi’s loose alliance with the SPLA-IG, his subsequent defection significantly altered relations and even the ethnic composition of the camp. Further alliance formation and fractionalization in this conflict remain unpredictable, especially in the now divided SPLA-IO. There have already been disagreements between Olonyi and Lam Akol, both of whom are Shilluk, regarding the direction of the opposition in Upper Nile and there are rumblings that there are divisions between the top military leaders respecting Olonyi’s concerns over Shilluk grievances and desires and Akol’s perhaps far
greater political ambitions. Though the Nuer and Shilluk have put aside their differences and are currently coexisting peacefully in the PoC this could change, particularly considering tensions and frustrations due to congestion, necessitating further space for contingency planning.

**Map 3. Contingency Planning in the PoC**

**VII. CONCLUSIONS AND WAYS FORWARD**

The way forward is not easy, but the international community, including donors, diplomatic heads of missions, UNMISS and humanitarian agencies need to start recognizing the myriad ways in which the lack of physical humanitarian space dictates the possibilities of service access and quality of life for the IDPs in the Malakal PoC. It should be clear from the discussion and evidence presented in this report that space needs to be prioritized as the foremost solution to the health and safety-related challenges in the PoC. As discussed in the “Current Space and Shelter Situation” section of the report, at present there is an area adjacent to sector 2 that has already been partially developed for such an expansion, but was put on hold. At a basic level, there is a need to distribute services more equitably through the camp to avoid perceptions of discrimination by the Mission and humanitarian partners and to make shelter standards consistent, both of which cannot be done without the allocation of additional space. At the same time, the current situation in the camp and the dangerous levels of congestion that mare life for IDPs in the Malakal PoC are putting the population at risk, contributing to a decline in people’s health and mental well-being with the spread of disease amongst people living in close quarters.
Once again, no one anticipated that the PoCs would be anything other than temporary. However, many of the sites across the country are now entering their fourth year of existence. With intensifying conflict throughout South Sudan since the clashes in July 2016 and worsening food insecurity with famine recently declared in some areas, as highlighted elsewhere humanitarian partners and UNMISS need to be prepared for the fact that the PoCs are likely to be around for some time longer, even if they are not a desirable solution to internal displacement. Notwithstanding the fact that some external actors have argued that the provision of services inside the PoCs will generate “pull factors” with further expansions and efforts to meet minimum humanitarian standards simply engendering another draw to the sites, this is simply not the case, particularly in Malakal. With the fighting that broke out on the west bank of Malakal in January 2017, devastating Wau Shilluk and surrounding areas and forcing thousands to flee north towards Kadok and the ensuing blocking of river access by the SPLA-IG, people have few options outside of the PoC. And with the very real fear of an impending attack on Kadok by government troops, moving towards Kadok and Aboruc could entail serious physical security concerns.

Furthermore, while it is important to continue to respond to the immediate needs of the families and communities stuck in the PoC, actors need to start thinking much more critically about promoting the long-term recovery of IDP populations in South Sudan and enhancing peoples resilience, which, in the case of the Malakal PoC has received a significant blow as a result of the congested living conditions in the camp. Rather than “temporary” solutions to the immediate physical protection of civilians, we have to start thinking about more durable solutions to the current scenario where the PoCs resemble something much closer to a full-fledged IDP camp. As stressed in the introduction, the current strategy of limiting service provision in the Malakal site is actually reproducing the dependency of the population on the UN Mission and agencies with most humanitarian service providers only able to supply the most basic of relief programming without being able to encourage recovery and ensure that beneficiaries do not merely collapse once people are finally able to leave the PoC. Partners, themselves, expressed growing discomfort knowing that as time went on they were still striving, and unable to even meet minimum emergency standards in their work even though people had already been there for over three years. As highlighted elsewhere, “[p]eople fleeing violence and seeking protection in the PoC sites in South Sudan should not be forced to choose between staying safe from violence, or safe from diseases and the minimum SPHERE standards should never be characterized as a “pull factor” – they are life saving.” One could go even further to say that the link between appropriate living conditions is not standards as such, but is more about the well-being of people in the PoC.

Hopefully this report has made apparent that, the consequences of congestion in the PoC are intersectional in nature, cutting across and linking different issues, whether it be in the connections between women’s access to income and resources and the protection concerns they face in the form of sexual violence outside of the PoC perimeters, or the interdependence between the lack of space for appropriate latrine and bathing areas, gender-based violence (GBV) and hygiene impacts. This necessitates a more holistic view of the circumstances and problems in the PoC. A WASH issue is rarely just a WASH issue in a setting where there is an absence of space. It is a protection issue; it is a health issue and so on, requiring much more in the way of a truly multi-sectoral and coordinated response amongst partners in the PoC. Indeed, as other research in South Sudan has shown, rather than viewing different components of a response separately, individuals, families and communities would benefit far more from an integrated response. Yet, as a past report has pointed out, this does not mean coordination at the expense of actual programming where resources are expended maintaining a non-functioning system, but it does mean recognizing the linkages between the issues in various sectors.

The same could be said of contextual analysis and knowledge. The limited emergency lens often applied to South Sudan at times leads to short-term, uncoordinated responses that in some senses mirror and prolong the experience of displacement and dependency culture – having an impact on resiliency and recovery. It is well known that more effective responses are based on a contextualized identification of the problems at hand. In practice, however, this rarely ever happens, especially in South Sudan where
turnover rates remain exceedingly high and there is a lack of institutional knowledge amongst many agencies. As the previously cited report on the PoCs emphasized, “UNMISS and humanitarian actors often respond without a good analysis of the situation. They should increase their institutional knowledge of the history, culture and context of South Sudan in order to improve programming.” It is not, for example, that uncouth youth are building on WASH corridors in the Malakal PoC as a symptom of their delinquency. Rather, as this report made clear, such behaviors are rooted in cultural practices and the rapid shifts in social life and gender relations for people in the PoC, especially males who are no longer able to reach idealized norms of masculinity and adulthood. The reliance on narrowly defined categories of beneficiaries, too, ignores the interconnected nature of vulnerability in South Sudan and the vulnerabilities of the society as a whole. The reason women leave the PoC in search of firewood and other items to support their families knowing that they may be subject to rape and other-related offenses, for example, is grounded in the fact that men who leave the PoC are viewed as “rebels” and hence the legitimate targets of murder, disappearance and torture. Lastly, given the sort of vicious cycle that has been produced in the PoC where the lack of physical space has led to a decrease in the quality of services, leading to negative relationships between the population and service providers, much more needs to be done in the way of two-way communication. Humanitarian agencies and UNMISS are doing the best they can under exceptionally difficult and unique circumstances, but there still needs to be feedback to the people even when there are challenges at hand, with expectations adequately managed. Contextual knowledge and transparency with the population would not only improve relations with the population, but also move towards countering the dependency culture. If the IDPs residing in the PoC had a clearer idea of what can and cannot be delivered, for example, they may more actively seek alternatives elsewhere.

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**Notes**

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ii Andre Heller Perache, Samuel Carpenter, and Lucie Lecarpentier. “If basic life support is a pull factor, let them come,” *MSF Opinion and Debate* (23 June 2016).


iv Ibid.

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x Source: Reach


xiii International Refugee Rights Initiative, “Protecting some of the people.”


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xix See, Alicia E. Luedke, “Violence begets violence.”

xx Michael J. Arensen, ‘If we leave we are killed.’

xxi Ibid.

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xxiii Ibid.
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Picture 9: DRC staff, sector 4 (credit Alicia Luedke)
The contents of this report are the ideas and opinions of the author based on a desk review, together with extended local field research carried out in Malakal, South Sudan and do not necessarily represent the views of the organization, or the donor agency.